

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /101 W

-----062773 021130Z /10

R 010855Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8363

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 4094

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, SU, SA, EG

SUBJ: SUDANESE-SAUDI AND SUDANESE-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO CLOSE ADVISOR OF NIMEIRI, SUDAN-SAUDI RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED MARKEDLY SINCE SUDANGOV DEVALUED POUND AND REACHED AGREEMENT WITH IMF RE ECONOMIC REFORM PACKAGE. HE ALSO BELIEVES USG PLAYING KEY ROLE IN ASSURING GOOD SAUDI-SUDAN RELATIONS, AND HE THOROUGHLY APPROVES. RELATIONS WITH EGYPT HAVE DETERIORATED SOMEWHAT, BUT THERE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT SINCE FUNDAMENTAL BASES OF SUDAN-EGYPT RELATIONSHIP REMAIN STRONG. END SUMMARY

1. DURING MEETING ON OTHER MATTERS AUGUST 30 WITH NIMEIRI CONFIDANTE AND ADVISOR FATH ABD AL-RAHMAN BESHIR, I ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT CURRENT SUDANESE RELATIONS WITH ITS TWO PRINCIPAL ARAB NEIGHBORS, SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT. HE DESCRIBED RELATIONS WITH SAUDIS AS QUOTE MUCH BETTER UNQUOTE AND AFTER LONG PAUSE HE SAID RELATIONS WITH EGYPT HAD
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DETERIORATED SOMEWHAT RECENTLY.

2. ON RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, BESHIR WAS CAUTIOUS. AFTER LONG PAUSE WHILE HE CONSIDERED HOW TO REPLY TO MY QUESTION, HE CONCEDED THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS HAD DETERIORATED, ALTHOUGH HE HASTENED TO ADD THAT FUNDAMENTAL SUDAN-EGYPT TIES REMAIN STRONG. HOWEVER, NIMEIRI'S ATTEMPTS

NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH LIBYA, APPARENTLY TAKEN WITHOUT CONSULTING CAIRO FIRST, CAUSED SOME CONCERN AMONG EGYPTIANS. MOREOVER, BESHIR SAID, NIMEIRI'S FAILURE PUBLICLY SUPPORT SADAT INITIATIVE AT OAU SUMMIT UPSET EGYPTIAN LEADER. IN DEFENSE OF NIMEIRI, BESHIR SAID THAT AS PRESIDENT OF OAU AS A LEADER ARAB RECONCILIATION EFFORTS, SUDANESE LEADER MUST AVOID PARTISAN OR CONTENTIOUS PUBLIC STATEMENTS. HE CONTINUES SUPPORT MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORT, HOWEVER (SPETEL). ON BALANCE, BESHIR DID NOT SEEM UNDULY CONCERNED OVER WHATEVER DETERIORATION MAY HAVE OCCURRED IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH EGYPT. SINCE FUNDAMENTAL BASES BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP REMAIN STRONG.

3. BESHIR, WHO OFTEN IS USED BY NIMEIRI FOR SENSITIVE POLITICAL TASKS INCLUDING WITH SAUDIS, SAID IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH SAUDIS FOLLOWED RECENT STEPS TOWARD ECONOMIC REFORM, NOTABLY DEVALUATION SUDANESE POUND, AND AGREEMENT WITH IMF. HE NOTED THESE STEPS WERE ALSO RELEVANT IN CONTEXT SUDANESE-KUWAITI RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO BESHIR, ONCE SUDAN GOV HAD SQUARED ITSELF AWAY WITH IMF, RELATIONS WITH SAUDIS BEGAN IMPROVE QUICKLY. HE SAID NIMEIRI MAY MAKE QUICK TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA QUOTE TO MAKE HAJ UNQUOTE PRIOR TO GOING TO U.S. AND EUROPE IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER PERIOD. BESHIR ALSO SAID HE ANTICIPATED ADDITIONAL SAUDI FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE NOW THAT ECONOMIC REFORM STEPS BEING TAKEN.

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4. BESHIR STRESSED NEED FOR USG TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH SAUDIS ABOUT SUDAN. I NOTED THAT IN PAST SOME SUDANESE OFFICIALS HAD URGED US NOT TO DISCUSS SUDAN DIRECTLY WITH SAUDIS OR OTHERS, ARGUING THAT SUCH DISCUSSIONS WERE INHERENTLY SENSITIVE AND SHOULD BE LEFT FOR TWO ARAB STATES TO CONDUCT. BESHIR, HOWEVER, SAID THIS VIEW WAS WRONG. HE ALSO DISCOUNTED MY CONTENTION THAT IDEA OF SUPERPOWER DISCUSSING WITH ANOTHER STATE WHAT TO DO IN THIRD COUNTRY SEEMED TO BE ANATHEMA IN THIRD WORLD.

5. COMMENT: BESHIR'S PRINCIPAL INTEREST WAS ON SAUDI ARABIA AND MORE PRECISELY ON ROLE USG CAN PLAY IN ASSURING SMOOTH SUDAN-SAUDI RELATIONS. WHILE WE NOT SURE HIS VIEWS ARE EXACTLY THOSE OF NIMEIRI, WE NOTE THEY VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE EXPRESSED TO US ON OTHER OCCASIONS BY MINPRESIDENCY AFFAIRS DR. BAH A EL-DIN IDRIS. BESHIR CONVINCED IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH SAUDIS DIRECTLY RELATED TO CONSULTATIONS ON SUDAN HE ASSUMES SAUDIS AND WE CONDUCT ON CONTINUING BASIS. MOREOVER, HE THOROUGHLY APPROVES SINCE HE BELIEVES USG, IN ITS OWN INTEREST WISHES PRESERVE MODERATE NIMEIRI REGIME AND THEREFORE IS URGING SAUDIS TO BE HELPFUL.

6. THIS ATTITUDE, WHICH IS WIDELY SHARED HERE HAS AS ITS PREMISE THAT COMBINATION OF U.S. - SAUDI ECONOMIC, MILITARY AND POLITICAL BENEVOLENCE IS CRUCIAL TO STABILITY NIMEIRI REGIME. ON OTHER HAND CONTINUANCE THIS REGIME IMPORTANT TO U.S., SAUDI AND OTHER WESTERN AND MODERATE ARAB INTERESTS. THUS, THERE COMPLETE MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS AND ALL THREE PARTIES SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE IF ANY TWO OF THEM DISCUSS THIRD. HOWEVER, GIVEN SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES IN DEALING WITH SAUDIS, SUDANESE BELIEVE USG OFTEN MUCH BETTER PLACED TO DISCUSS SUDAN FAVORABLY THAN ARE SUDANESE THEMSELVES. THEY BELIEVE SAUDIS MORE LIKELY TO LISTEN TO AMERICANS THAN TO SUDANESE.

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SAUDI RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED MARKEDLY SINCE SU DANGOV DE
TAGS: PEPR, SU, SA, EG
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